

ROADS, BRIDGES, HIGHWAYS

Market Roads

Better market roads for farmers was one of the vote-catching cries of the C.C.F. Party in 1944.

They have had eight years in office. Revenues have enormously increased. They have left the problem of building and maintaining market roads almost entirely to the municipalities.

In a broadcast reported in the Commonwealth of January 26th, 1952, Minister of Municipal Affairs, L. M. McIntosh, said: "The Provincial government has marked out and assumed as an exclusive responsibility approximately 8,300 miles of roads, which are known as provincial highways. This left approximately 145,000 miles as the responsibility of local governments." "The burden, placed upon local institutions in providing adequate roads, is almost staggering," he said.

In 1950-51 the provincial government paid local governments \$546,000 as grants to assist in building and maintaining market roads, \$376,000 to rural municipalities and \$170,000 to local improvement districts.

The thousands of farmers who at times find it impossible to truck their produce to market or make connections with all weather highways should find these figures very interesting.

Of this meagre amount \$200,000 was taken from a fund which properly belongs to some of the municipalities. When farm lands were being reassessed, most assessments were considerably reduced, resulting in a reduction in the Public Revenue Tax paid to the Provincial government. Where reassessments were delayed there was considered to be overpayment of public revenue tax and the Patterson government accumulated a fund of \$1,260,000 with the intention of returning this to those municipalities which had overpaid. This money properly belongs to some of the municipalities and not to the C.C.F. government. That government has been using it for road grants.

Timber Bridges

Timber bridges on municipal roads were, before the election of the C.C.F., constructed by the Provincial government. There are about 3,000 of these bridges and nearly half were constructed prior to 1929 and now have to be replaced. The present government

refers to this as a municipal responsibility and intends to throw on the municipalities half the cost of rebuilding these bridges. The revenues, now taken in by the C.C.F. government, are 3 or 4 times as large as received by the governments which build these bridges.

\ A Pork Barrel Highways Policy

The highways construction policy of the C.C.F. government has been strongly influenced by party politics. From 1944 to 1949 the average total expenditures for construction, reconstruction and surfacing of highways per constituency were: constituencies represented by Liberals \$22,000; constituencies represented by C.C.F. members \$385,000; constituencies (not including cities) represented by ministers \$495,000.

One of these political highways was No. 39, built from Regina to the United States border and through the constituency represented by Premier T. C. Douglas. Parts of this road were rebuilt and the whole was black-topped. The cost of the project was about \$2,600,000. The work was rushed to make as good a showing as possible for the 1948 election. Because of the haste and faulty methods of construction used, this highway has become worn out in 3 or 4 years.

In the spring and summer of 1951 the sides of this highway disintegrated and extensive and expensive repairs were necessary.

In April, 1952, some sections of the road became impassable. Trucks bogged down. Cars could not pass each other. Garage owners reported that cars were coming in for repairs because of damage caused by deep ruts. Conditions were so bad that the Department of Highways banned traffic, and the Saskatchewan Transportation Company was compelled to suspend the operation of government owned bus services. The government plans to re-surface this highway. That is no solution. The surface will continue to break up. The roadbed will have to be widened and properly rebuilt before any surface will last a reasonable time.

There are some other sections of black top road built just before the 1948 election which are in a similar condition.

The whole road building program of the C.C.F. government has been characterized by blundering inefficiency and wasteful extravagance. The present Minister started out by dismissing or requiring the resignations of most of the experienced road engineers. Huge amounts of road machinery have been purchased so that the government could go into the road building business instead of letting tenders, with the usual results of higher costs and inferior work. Highways have been built for political purposes, concentrating expenditures in constituencies represented by C.C.F. members and rushing highways programs to make impressions just before elections.

The C.C.F. boast about the large amounts spent on highways. No one questions the capacity of the C.C.F. government to spend money. It is the people's money and the people are getting very little value for the expenditures made.

The Liberal Program

1. Substantially increased grants to municipalities to assist in building and maintaining market roads.
2. The province to accept responsibility for rebuilding bridges built by previous provincial governments.
3. A new highways policy to fit the needs of all the people of Saskatchewan and the building by the province of properly constructed highways and bridges.
4. The province to build and maintain highways through towns and villages.
5. The province to build and maintain secondary highways.
6. Increased road and air transportation to provide better access to northern Saskatchewan mining areas, thus assuring the people of Saskatchewan an opportunity to share to the greatest possible extent in the development and processing of the great wealth of mineral resources within our province.
7. Every possible encouragement of the building of branch railway lines in northern and other parts of the province where required.
8. Federal aid in constructing and maintaining highways.

A Liberal Government will have more revenue from increased expansion to spend on highways and main market roads. It will use that money to build highways that will not require rebuilding 3 or 4 years after completion.

It will give greatly increased assistance to Municipalities in regard to main market roads.

It will place special emphasis on roads to promote the development of the Province and particularly in Northern Saskatchewan.

FORWARD SASKATCHEWAN!

**SASKATCHEWAN DESERVES A
BETTER GOVERNMENT**

**You Can Make This Possible
BY VOTING
LIBERAL**

**Published by authority of Saskatchewan Liberal Association,
315 McCallum-Hill Bldg., Regina, Sask.**

Printed by Commercial Printers, Ltd., Regina, Sask.

